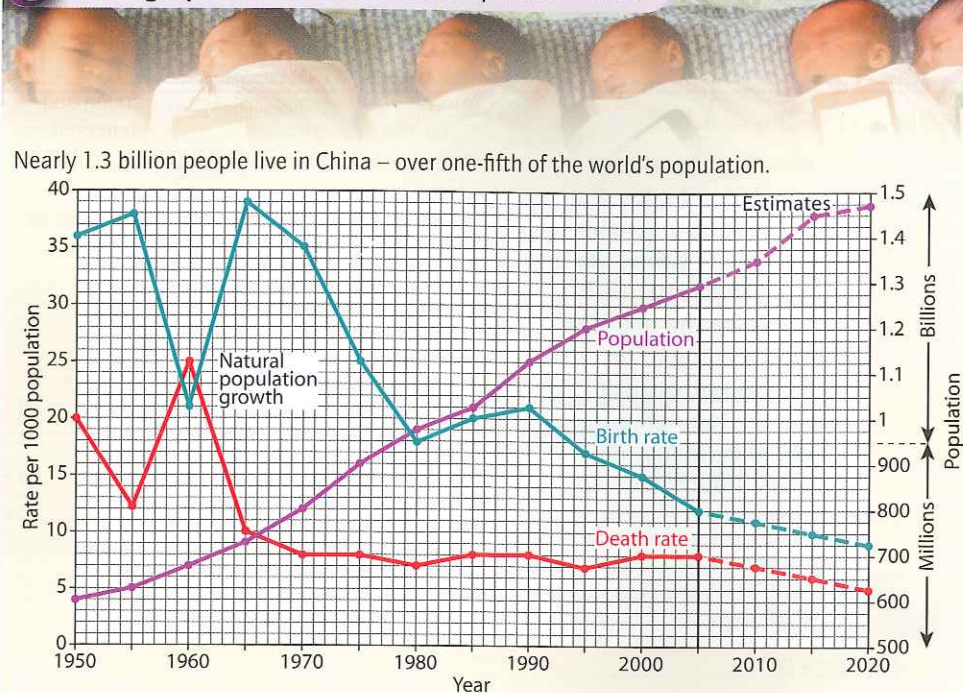


The population problem

Since 1949 the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has ruled China. Until the early 1970s the CCP showed little interest in controlling population growth. Indeed between 1960 and 1970 the Chinese leader, Mao Zedong, encouraged his people to have large families. He believed that more people meant a stronger China and that, in the event of war with the USA, more people would ensure victory. By the early 1970s, however, it was clear that there would not be enough food, jobs or services to cope with the rapidly growing population. A drastic solution was needed. In 1980 the first one-child policy was introduced to control population growth.

A Demographic transition in China, 1950–2020



Task 1

Study Source A.

- State the birth rate, death rate and natural population change for 1965.
- How had these changed by 2005? Use data in your answer.
- How did China's population change between 1950 and 2005? How might it change between 2005 and 2020?

B A timeline of population 'events'

1958–63 CCP introduces 'The Great Leap Forward' 5-year plan: an attempt to reform agriculture and industry, but the changes are poorly implemented. Floods and drought follow in 1959–62, causing 20 million deaths through disease and starvation.

1970s China realises that high population growth is unsustainable. The 'Later, Longer, Fewer' policy is introduced. This encourages parents to delay their first child, allow a longer interval between births and have fewer children in total.

1984–2006 Population growth is reduced from 2.4% to 1%. Average fertility in 2006 down to 1.7 children per woman. The one-child policy has precluded the need for China to cope with 300 million extra births. Some relaxing of policy in 21st century. Rural families may have two children.

1963–70

Government encourages large families to make China stronger. Average fertility in 1963 is 5.8 children per woman. In 1965 birth rate reaches almost 40 per 1000.

1950s No major influence by CCP ruling party on population.

1978–83 'One family, one child' policy emerges. Rapid population growth seen as barrier to development. China wants to modernise four key areas: industry, agriculture, defence, science and technology.



Consequences of the 'One family, one child' policy

China has the world's biggest national population, with 1.3 billion people. But the population is not balanced. There are about 86 girls to every 100 boys in China. The desire for a boy is part of Chinese culture. The belief that only a son

can carry on the family line and lead proper ceremonies of remembrance of ancestors dates back thousands of years. In rural areas boys are also preferred for farm work and looking after their ageing parents.

C Where are the girls?

In some rural areas where boys are needed to help on the farm and care for their parents, a second child is allowed if the first is a girl.

Some men divorce their wives if a girl is born. This way they can try again for a boy with a new wife.

Some newborn babies, especially girls, have been killed, abandoned at birth or sold to 'baby-traffickers'.

Parents who have two children in a short time often pretend they are twins to avoid being fined. Others 'park' a second child with childless relatives.

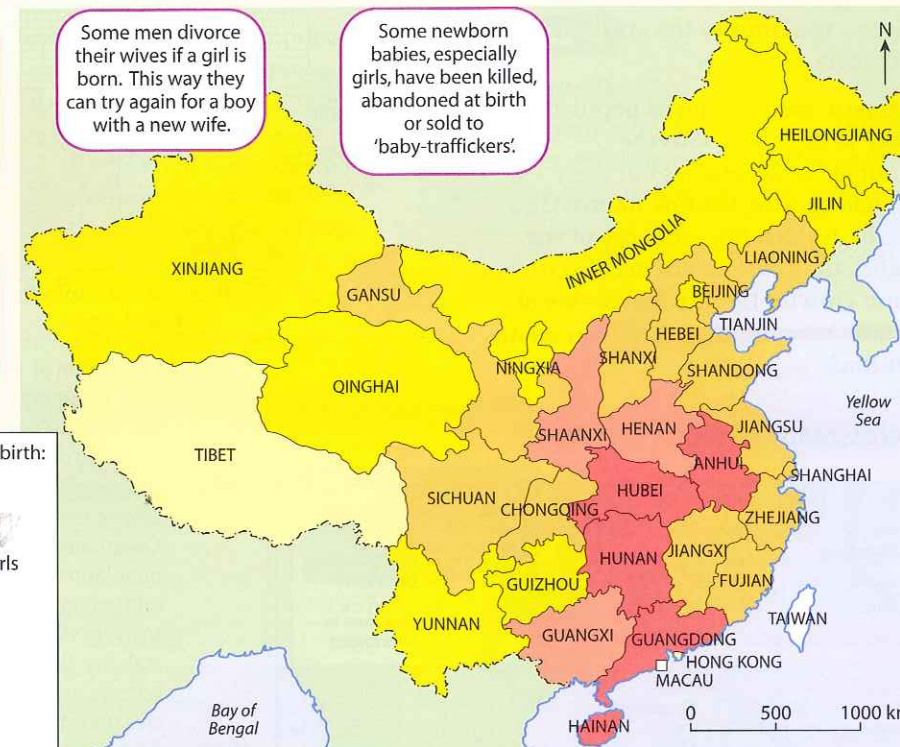
Women have been under pressure to abort second pregnancies or undergo forced sterilisation.

Couples face being fined for having a second child. The fine varies from US\$400 to US\$14 000 depending on the region – this can be a year's salary for many workers.

After a major earthquake in May 2008, parents who lost children no longer had to pay fines for having another child. They could also adopt orphans if they had lost their only child.

Natural gender ratio at birth:
95 girls per 100 boys
China average:
86 girls per 100 boys

■ Fewer than 80 girls
■ 80–84
■ 85–89
■ 90–94
■ 95 or more
■ No data



D China's population by age-group (est. millions)

Age	1950	1995	2010	2025	2050
50+	87	209	332	526	631
20–49	228	594	665	597	529
5–19	165	320	290	278	247
0–4	76	103	93	86	78
Total	556	1226	1380	1487	1485

Task 3

Study Source C.

- Name **one** province with:
 - fewer than 80 girls per 100 boys
 - more than 90 girls per 100 boys.
- How does the distribution of provinces with the fewest girls compare with those with the most girls?
- The areas with the most girls are often rural farming areas. What problems might this cause for farming traditions in China?

Task 4

Study Source D.

- Draw a graph to represent this data.
- By how much is it estimated that population will grow between 1950 and 2050? Is there evidence that the population will achieve stability?
- What is expected to happen to the 0–4 and the 50+ age-groups over this period?
- Suggest problems that China's rulers will face in 2050 if these estimates are correct. How could these be overcome?

Task 5

Write down **three** statements that support the 'One family, one child' policy, and **three** that are against it as a way of controlling population. What do you think? Justify your answer.